



Canada Firearms
Centre

Centre des armes à feu
Canada

2003 REPORT – COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

RAPPORT 2003 – COMMISSAIRE AUX ARMES À FEU

2003 REPORT

COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

Canada 



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Cat. No. PS96-2003

ISBN: 0-662-68463-X





Canada Firearms
Centre

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Canada

Commissioner

Commissaire

The Honourable A. Anne McLellan, P.C, M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Deputy Prime Minister:

Pursuant to subsection 93 (1) of the *Firearms Act*, I hereby transmit the first Report of the Commissioner of Firearms on the administration of the *Firearms Act*, for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2003 for tabling in Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

William V. Baker

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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER



It is with great pleasure that I present the first report of the Commissioner of Firearms on the administration of the *Firearms Act*. The report highlights the activities and achievements of the Canada Firearms Centre (CAFC) and the Canadian Firearms Program during the 2003 calendar year.

Our organization began life as the Canadian Firearms Centre, a branch within the Department of Justice Canada, where it resided from 1996 until early 2003. Then, in April 2003, the new Canada Firearms Centre was established as an independent agency within the former Solicitor General's portfolio (now the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada). With passage of Bill C-10A in May 2003, the position of Commissioner of Firearms was created — a position to which I was subsequently appointed.

Our achievements during 2003 were realized in the context of active public and parliamentary discussion and debate of the Firearms Program, largely precipitated by the December 2002 report of the Auditor General, which raised several concerns regarding program funding, management and reporting. That report was a key stimulus for the *Gun Control Program Action Plan*, announced by the Government in February 2003.

The *Gun Control Program Action Plan* set the strategic direction for our efforts, as well as specifying deliverables to be achieved. I am proud to report that we have followed that direction, charting a bold and effective course for the management of the CAFC and the delivery of the Firearms Program.

During 2003, we implemented the majority of the items in the Action Plan, with work on the others well underway. For example, the CAFC enhanced its Web site services to enable firearm owners to report address changes and to verify the status of their licence and registration applications on-line, a Program Advisory Committee was established to provide ongoing advice on the design and delivery of the Program, many initiatives were undertaken in support of stronger financial management and we established and began to implement a Continuous Improvement Plan containing many additional initiatives to enhance performance.



The passage of Bill C-10A in May 2003 also set the stage for improvements to the Program, including the leveling of workload. In addition, this legislation allowed the Government to put forward important proposed changes to regulations and invite public consultation on them.

In the fall of 2003, we held national consultations with stakeholders across the country to discuss the design and delivery of the Firearms Program, as well as the proposed changes to the *Firearms Act* regulations that the Government tabled in June 2003. These consultations, along with the input we received from members of the public via the Internet, were highly valuable. We heard from representatives of firearm owners, from hunter and wildlife federations, from firearms businesses and from public safety and public health groups and professionals.

The input and feedback we received confirmed that we are on the right track. Recent improvements in services were acknowledged and appreciated, as were the streamlining measures the Government put forward in the proposed regulations.

There was a strong consensus on many fronts, despite the participants' diverse interests and concerns. For example, there was clear agreement on the need for the highest possible quality of information in the Canadian Firearms Information System to support law enforcement and reduce risks to public safety.

Representatives from all quarters also agreed on the need to communicate program requirements and benefits by working more extensively at the community level. This was accompanied by a strong expression of willingness to work with the CAFC to achieve even higher levels of performance. Additionally, the licensing of firearm owners, safety training, safe storage and transport of firearms and effective border controls were almost universally supported. At the same time, some longstanding concerns and divergent views about other program elements, particularly firearms registration, remained.

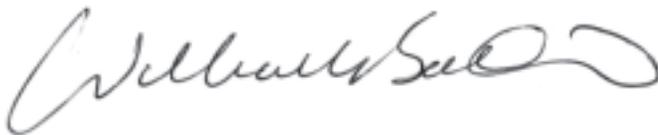
Our relationships with our partner agencies, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canada Border Services Agency, are critical to effective delivery of the Program. Here, too, I am pleased to report that we made substantial progress, building on already strong collaborative arrangements. One example is joint work to address issues related to the illegal cross-border movement of firearms between Canada and the United States. Furthermore, we have made significant advances with provincial Chief Firearms Officers regarding national standards and the coordinated delivery of services across the country.

Because we are a new agency, a key challenge was to lay the foundation of an effective organization. We needed to reorganize ourselves to create an effective management and program delivery structure. This involved reinforcing the senior management team, including the appointment of a Chief Financial Officer and a Chief Operating Officer.

We consolidated our headquarters activities to save costs and streamline management. The Canadian Firearms Registry and the position of Registrar of Firearms were moved from the RCMP into the CAFC, to further support coherent, effective and efficient program administration. At the same time, the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team was moved from the CAFC into the RCMP to improve its alignment with both the RCMP's enforcement mandate and that of the National Police Services. We also began the process of consolidating the Firearms Program call centre and our application processing operations into one site at Miramichi, New Brunswick.

Coming out of 2003, we are well placed to meet the challenges of managing a program with diverse and interrelated elements and helping to ensure that it continues to contribute to safe and healthy communities across the country.

Our progress in 2003 depended on the active engagement of Canadians and our delivery partners. It also depended on the competence and dedication of CAFC and Canadian Firearms Program employees who continued to deliver quality services to Canadians in a challenging public environment. I thank them all for their contributions and their ongoing, day-to-day commitment to excellence in public service. Our future achievements will continue to rely on the work of each and every individual.



William V. Baker
Commissioner of Firearms

THE CAFC AND THE CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM

Our mission

The mission of the Canada Firearms Centre is to enhance public safety by:

- helping reduce death, injury and threat from firearms through responsible ownership, use and storage of firearms; and
- providing police and other organizations with expertise and information vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime and misuse in Canada and internationally.

Our mandate

The CAFC's mandate is to administer the *Firearms Act* and its regulations. It does so by working with other federal departments and agencies, and with provincial governments and officials who have responsibilities under the Act and related legislation.

The CAFC and the other agencies involved in the delivery of the Firearms Program contribute to public safety in a number of important ways:

- the licensing of firearm owners reduces the risk of firearms death and injury by screening people who apply for firearms licences. Such risks are further reduced through the continuous review of firearm owners to ensure that they remain eligible to possess or acquire firearms. Meeting national safety training standards is a requirement for new licence applicants;
- through the work of the CAFC and Chief Firearms Officers (CFOs), the Program includes community-level public education about firearms and their safe storage, handling and use;
- the Program supports law enforcement by registering all firearms owned in Canada, manufactured in Canada, and imported into or exported from Canada. Registration information helps police intervene proactively to address public safety risks as well as aid in tracing lost, stolen or crime guns; and

- the Program contributes to international efforts to combat the illegal cross-border movement of firearms, including assisting enforcement authorities in identifying and tracking illegally imported firearms.

Our values

The CAFC is committed to upholding the Canadian values of an open society that include maintaining public safety while respecting the lawful ownership and use of firearms. The CAFC also recognizes the crucial importance of working closely with its partners who are so valuable to the development of the policies, legislation and regulations that contribute to the success of the Program.

The CAFC is committed to the prudent management of its resources so that Canadians receive good value for their money. It is also committed to reporting clearly on how it uses these resources and meets its responsibilities. Through a program of continuous improvement and innovation, it aims to achieve the highest levels of service, compliance and effectiveness.

In all these activities, the CAFC upholds the values and ethical standards of the Public Service of Canada. It is committed to fair staffing, employee development and a work environment that encourages involvement and initiative.

The CAFC

The responsibility for the Canadian Firearms Program rested with the Minister of Justice until April 2003 when the Government made an important organizational change to strengthen the Program's management and accountability and align its work with that of other agencies whose mandates focus on public safety.

The CAFC was established as a separate agency within the portfolio of the Solicitor General, now the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. As such, the CAFC receives funding voted by Parliament and is required to report directly to Parliament on the administration of the Program.

The year 2003 also saw the appointment of the first Commissioner of Firearms, who is responsible for the administration of the *Firearms Act* and the management of the Canada Firearms Centre.



CAFC Headquarters in Ottawa comprises six directorates:

- Operations, including:
 - Licensing;
 - Registration;
 - Information Technology;
- Policy and Consultations;
- Finance and Administration;
- Communications and Public Affairs;
- Human Resources; and
- Legal Services (provided by the Department of Justice Canada).

(See organizational chart in Appendix A.)

Personnel and facilities are located across the country. The national call centre and application processing are in Miramichi, New Brunswick. Federal CFO operations are in place in Newfoundland and Labrador and throughout the four western provinces and the three territories. Table 1 provides the human resources complement breakdown.

Table 1

Human Resources Complement (as of December 31, 2003)

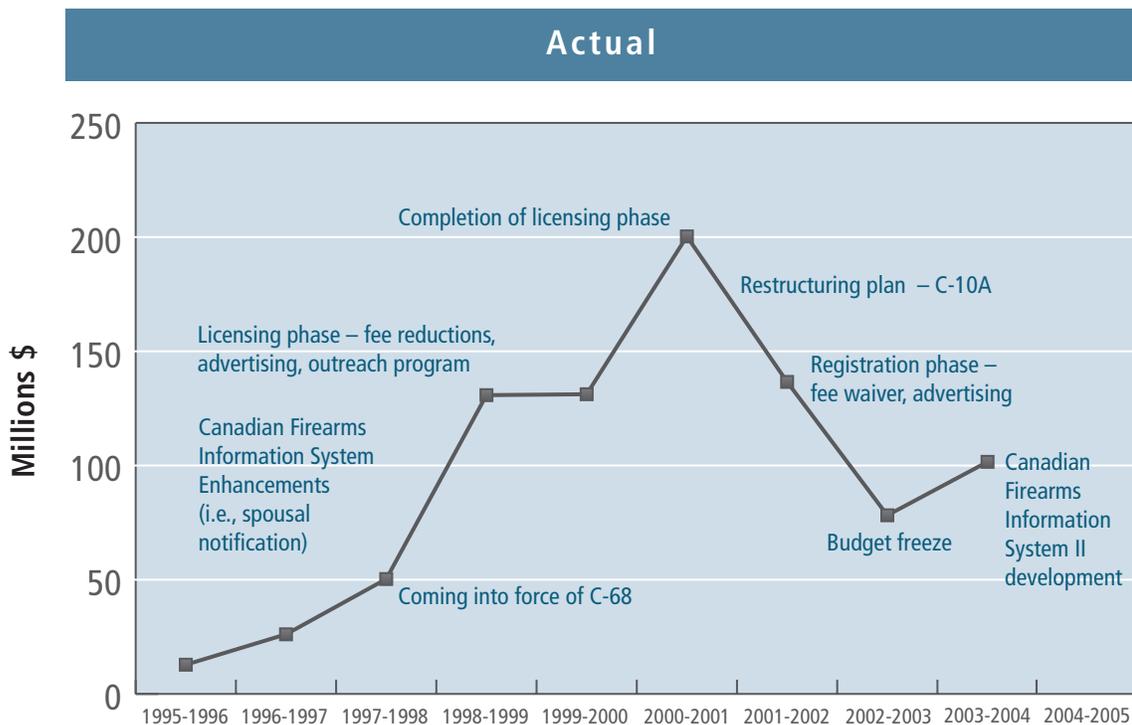
Location/Function	Number of Personnel
Ottawa (headquarters and registration operations)	120
Processing centres (consolidated in 2004 into one centre at Miramichi, N.B.)	115
Federal CFO operations (in Newfoundland and Labrador, all four western provinces and the three territories)	90
Total	325

Ten-year cost perspective

The Canadian Firearms Program is a complex, often technical and multi-jurisdictional program. This, combined with a highly charged public environment and with legislated licensing and registration deadlines, resulted in significant early implementation costs. The table below depicts the costs incurred since the beginning of the Program. Annual operating costs have now declined to \$100 million, which is half of what they were at their peak in 2000-2001, and are expected to decline further in future years as a result of the Government's *Gun Control Program Action Plan* and other improvement measures.

Table 2

Ten-year cost perspective



Protecting personal information

The Canadian Firearms Program is, at its core, about delivering quality service to Canadians in support of safe and healthy communities. This involves collecting personal information from Canadians in the course of administering the Firearms Program. The collection of information is done in a manner consistent with the federal *Privacy Act* and other relevant legislation, including provincial legislation where the CFO is provincially appointed.

Key partners in delivering the Program

CFOs in the provinces and territories are responsible for issuing firearms licences to businesses and individuals. They may refuse to issue a licence or may revoke a licence in accordance with the *Firearms Act*. Among other duties, CFOs designate instructors and examiners for the Canadian Firearms Safety Courses, approve shooting ranges, and authorize the transport of restricted and prohibited firearms.

CFOs are appointed by the responsible provincial minister. If a province decides not to appoint its own CFO, the *Firearms Act* directs that the federal minister will appoint one. Currently, there are two federally appointed CFOs: one is responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador, and the second is responsible for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The *Firearms Act* establishes the position of Registrar of Firearms who is responsible for issuing firearms registration certificates to licensed firearm owners and businesses on initial registration, on import and on transfer of firearms to another owner. The Registrar is also responsible for maintaining the Canadian Firearms Registry and for refusing to issue or revoking registration certificates when required.

The Canadian Firearms Program could not succeed without the cooperation and assistance of its many partners, including provincial CFOs, the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Department of Justice Canada and community and other organizations.

For a description of the CAFC's key government partners and their roles in the Firearms Program, please refer to Appendix B.

PUBLIC SAFETY BENEFITS OF THE CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM

The goal of the Canadian Firearms Program is to help reduce firearm-related deaths, injury and crime across Canada. To achieve this, the Program has several key activities, each of which is designed to make Canadians safer both in their homes and in public. These activities are licensing, registration, awareness of key regulations on safe storage and transportation of firearms and border controls.

The Canadian Firearms Program at work

A warrant was issued for the arrest of an Ontario man after he had allegedly assaulted his estranged wife in British Columbia. This information was entered into the incident file of the national police database known as the Canadian Police Information Centre. During its daily scanning of the incident files, the Canadian Firearms Information System quickly detected that the man had a firearms licence. Police in British Columbia and Ontario, as well as the local Firearms Officer in Ontario were notified of this. The Firearms Officer was able to act quickly to revoke the licence for public safety reasons. By revoking his firearms licence, he would not be able to legally acquire or possess a firearm.

Public safety through licensing

Licensing contributes to public safety in two ways. First, people must meet specific safety standards for handling and using firearms before they are granted a licence. Second, licensing requires the conduct of a variety of background checks designed to keep firearms out of the hands of people who should not have them.

Applicants are screened to detect potential risks to public safety, both on their initial application and when they apply to renew their licence, which they must do at five-year intervals. Spousal notification provisions ensure that former or current spouses, or common-law or conjugal partners, can express their concerns, if any, about the application. A CFO issues a licence only if an applicant meets the required safety criteria and does not appear to pose a threat to himself, herself or others.

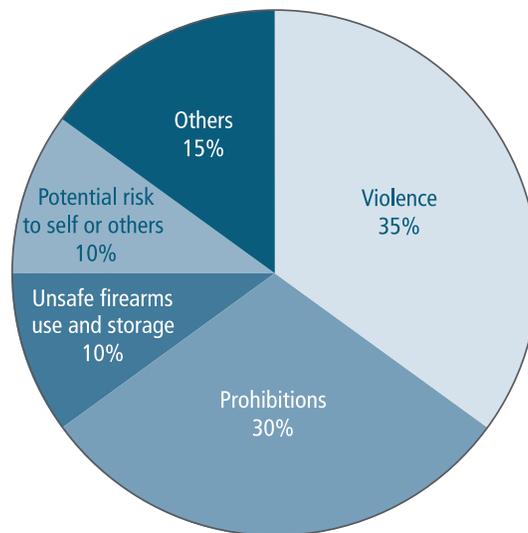
Continuous eligibility screening allows the review and, if required, the revocation of an existing licence, should a firearm owner become a public safety risk. The Canadian Police Information Centre is used to notify CFOs of police reports about such potential risks. CFOs then carry out follow-up

investigations as needed. The *Firearms Act* also requires the courts to notify CFOs of firearms prohibition orders against licence holders.

Between December 1, 1998, when the *Firearms Act* came into force, and December 31, 2003, a total of 12,074 firearms licences were refused or revoked because of violence, prohibition orders, misuse of firearms, and other public safety concerns (see Table 3).

Table 3

Reasons for refusals and revocations (1998-2003)



Firearms businesses must be licensed and employees who handle firearms on behalf of a licensed business need a firearms licence as well. Periodic checks ensure that these businesses can account for all the firearms in their inventory and are conducting business in a safe and lawful way. This aspect of licensing also reduces the risk of firearms falling into the wrong hands by illegal diversion from business inventories.

Public safety through firearms registration

The Canadian Firearms Program at work

A client wrote to the Canada Firearms Centre to explain how firearms registration had helped him. This client had experienced a break-in at his home many years ago and his firearms had been stolen. He had reported the firearms theft to the RCMP and the report was stored in the Canadian Police Information Centre. Recently, someone applied to register those firearms. Since all registration applications are checked against police files from across the country, the application was not processed and the firearms were returned to the rightful owner. This information helped police conclude an old theft investigation.

Firearms registration information contributes to the safety of communities by helping police:

- distinguish legal firearms from those acquired illegally, thereby helping law enforcement with the recovery and return of lost or stolen firearms;
- track the movement of firearms to support the investigation of illegal gun trafficking and smuggling;
- carry out investigations efficiently and effectively by tracing a firearm to its last legal owner;
- take appropriate precautions when responding to domestic violence or other disturbances, by helping to determine whether firearms might be present; and
- pre-empt violence or tragedy by removing firearms from a residence.

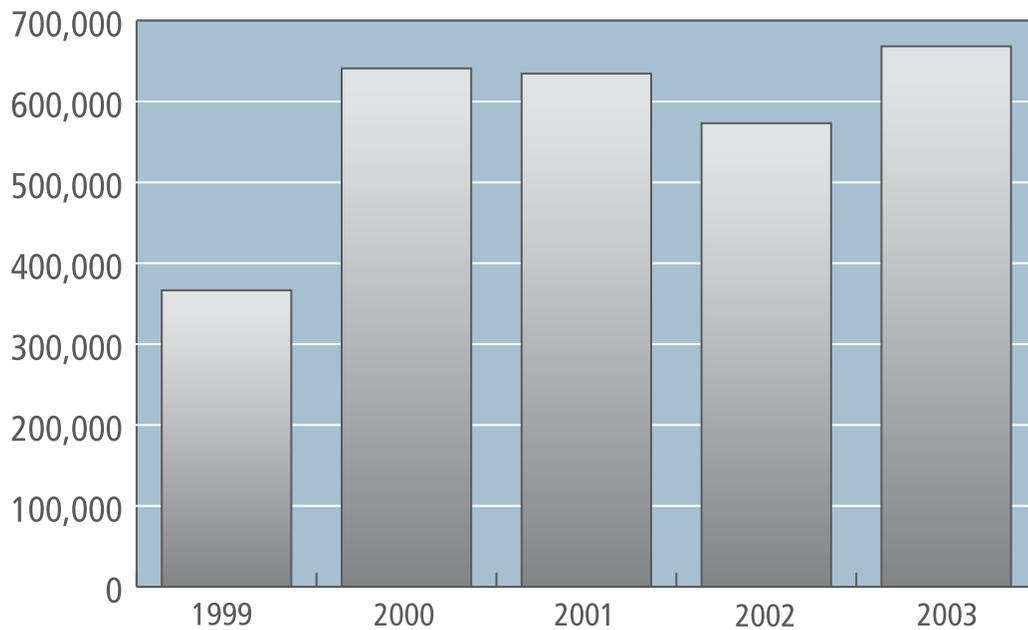
Timely information is critical to these activities. Through the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line, the Program provides police officers across the

country with instant, on-line access to the firearms-related data they need for their work via the Canadian Police Information Centre. By the end of 2003, police agencies had made close to three million enquiries on the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (see table 4).



Table 4

Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line inquiries by police agencies



Public safety through public awareness

Tragedies could be averted in Canada every year if all firearms were properly stored and transported. This is one of the reasons why regulations on storage, display, transportation and handling of firearms were implemented. To promote safety in this

The Canadian Firearms Program at work

Time becomes an important ally when someone is entertaining suicidal thoughts. An inaccessible firearm can help prevent firearms suicide. The time it takes to force open a firearms cabinet or a secure locking device can sometimes be just enough to discourage a person from committing suicide and instead seek appropriate help.

area, the CAFC's Firearms Safety Education and Awareness Program works with the provinces and territories, with national organizations that have an ongoing interest in firearms safety, and with many firearms and hunter education instructors across Canada. It has been in operation since March 1996 and is divided into two parts:

- **firearms safety education** — this part of the Program develops national firearms safety standards and national safety education courses, including the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course; and

- **firearms safety awareness** — this part of the Program develops and helps to implement programs to promote firearms safety. It also produces firearm-related promotional and information materials, along with training tools designed to encourage responsible ownership, handling, use, storage and transportation of firearms.

The Canadian Firearms Program regulates the storage and transportation of firearms in two additional ways:

- **carrier licences** — shipping and moving companies that transport firearms need a carrier licence that is valid for the class of firearms being transported. Firearms shipped by licensed carriers must meet certain regulatory standards to deter loss, theft or accidents; and
- **monitoring businesses** — firearms businesses must allow a CFO to inspect their premises periodically to ensure that the business is storing, displaying and transporting firearms safely, and that all employees who handle firearms for business purposes have met the safety training and licensing requirements.

Public safety through effective border controls

Effective firearms control at Canada's borders contributes to the reduction of firearm violence in Canada and abroad. International cooperation is crucial to these efforts because different countries have different domestic firearm regulations.

The border control element of the Firearms Program includes a requirement for non-resident hunters and target shooters visiting Canada to complete and submit a written declaration to the Canada Border Services Agency. The declaration serves as a temporary 60-day licence and registration certificate once a customs officer has confirmed it.

Proposed changes to regulations will further support law enforcement by requiring the reporting of the importation of certain types of firearms. Other regulations will allow Canada to meet its international obligations for the marking of firearms.

Businesses and individuals will be required to obtain a firearms import authorization from the Registrar once the *Importation and Exportation of Firearms Regulations (Individuals)* and the *Authorization to Export or Import Firearms Regulations (Businesses)* come into force. International Trade Canada will continue to issue firearms export permits as part of its trade mandate.



The CAFC works with Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency, Foreign Affairs Canada, International Trade Canada, the RCMP and international organizations to help deter the illegal movement and trafficking of firearms across international borders. It participates actively in discussions on firearms within the G-8, the Organization of American States and the United Nations. In addition, the CAFC takes part in bilateral Canada–U.S. meetings, including the Cross-Border Crime Forum.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

The year was one of challenges and changes for the CAFC and the Firearms Program. Whether event or legislatively driven, they had a profound and positive impact on the Program in 2003 and will serve to set the course for the future.

The 2002 Auditor General's report, combined with the independent review that followed, resulted in the announcement on February 21, 2003 of the Government of Canada *Gun Control Program Action Plan* to improve the Program's services, transparency and accountability while reducing costs. Much progress was realized in implementing the Auditor General's recommendations and the Action Plan during 2003 (see Appendix C).

Organizational, operational and administrative evolution

Key organizational changes took place, some as a direct result of the Action Plan, while others were made possible with the passage of Bill C-10A.

In April, the Canada Firearms Centre was moved from the Department of Justice Canada and became an independent agency within the portfolio of the Solicitor General (now Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada). At the same time, the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team was moved to the National Police Services of the RCMP. These changes improved the operational alignment of the Program and will be more conducive to timely information sharing. In addition, the integration of the registry function with CAFC operations in August supports the strong link between the registration and licensing components of the Program.

CAFC headquarters was streamlined by closing the Edmonton headquarters office and consolidating its functions in Ottawa. Work was substantially completed to establish one Central Processing Site in Miramichi, New Brunswick by March 2004. Closure of the Montreal site is expected to save approximately \$2 million annually while maintaining current service standards and appropriate bilingual capacity.

On the legislative front, Bill C-10A received Royal Assent in May and became Chapter 8, Statutes of Canada (2003). As several sections of Bill C-10A needed regulations before they could be brought into force, a draft regulations package was tabled in both Houses of Parliament in June. Consultations on the package and on program delivery improvements were held during the summer and fall with the public and interest groups affected by the regulations.



The *Gun Control Program Action Plan* guided the way in other key areas. A Chief Financial Officer was appointed to coordinate financial planning, budgeting, reporting and controlling of all CAFC transactions and resources. A Continuous Improvement Plan was instituted to enhance the operations of the Canadian Firearms Program by increasing efficiency, improving client services and ensuring greater compliance with the law. The plan helps with the strategic management of operational requirements, assists in working with partners to devise ways of addressing emerging concerns and supports organizational accountability and transparency.

The Program Advisory Committee, another key element of the Action Plan, was created in June. The Committee is comprised of people with expertise in firearms, public health and safety, policy development and program administration (see Appendix D for a list of members). The Program Advisory Committee advises the Commissioner of Firearms on opportunities to enhance compliance, improve service and increase efficiency. The Program Advisory Committee also identifies opportunities to build effective partnerships and strengthen public confidence in the Canadian Firearms Program. The Committee met twice in 2003.

Two major developments slowed progress in streamlining operations and reducing costs: the delayed passage of the legislation, Bill C-10A, and the development and implementation of new information technology. In addition, consultations on regulations proposed in June raised potential changes which required further consideration and postponed the making of the regulations.

The establishment of the CAFC as an independent agency also meant building capacity in corporate support functions such as contracting, human resources, communications, finance, administration and IT services. This included the development and implementation of frameworks, processes and practices to support effective decision-making for each corporate function.

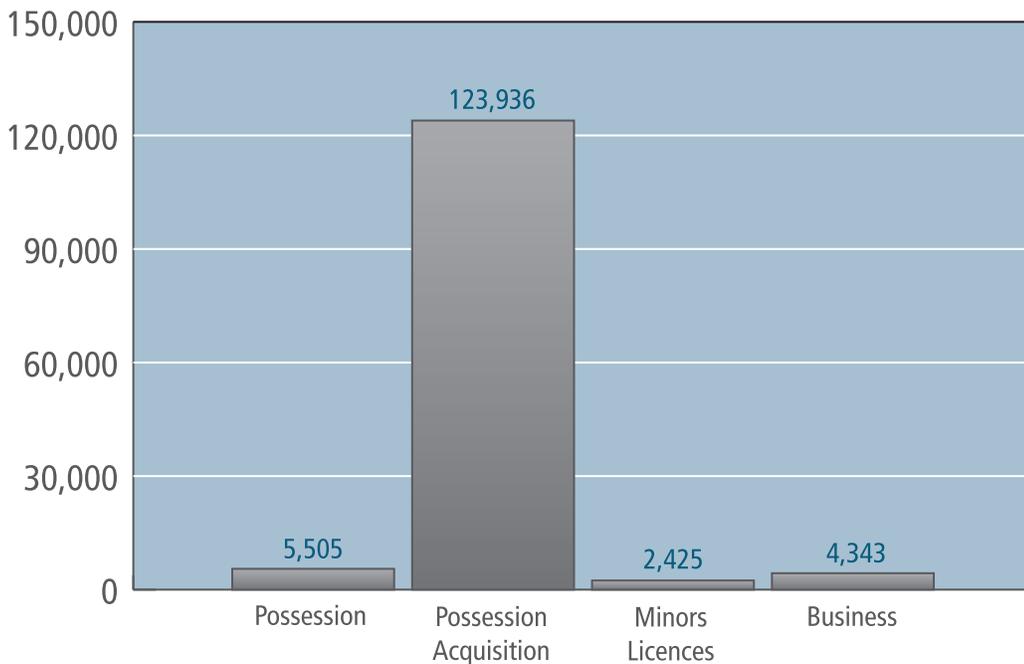
Licensing

The Firearms Program made continued progress in the area of licensing. As of December 31, 2003, there were 1.97 million valid individual firearms licences, with licence holders having passed the screening and eligibility checks required for possession and use of firearms. Based on an estimated total of 2.2 million firearm owners, this indicates that close to 90 per cent of all firearm owners had complied with licensing regulations.

In 2003, CFOs issued over 136,000 firearms licences to both new applicants and those individuals and businesses renewing licences that were about to expire. Table 5 provides statistics on program licensing operations during the 2003 calendar year. (Please refer to Appendix E for statistics on licences issued by jurisdiction in 2003.)

Table 5

Breakdown of licences issued by type in 2003

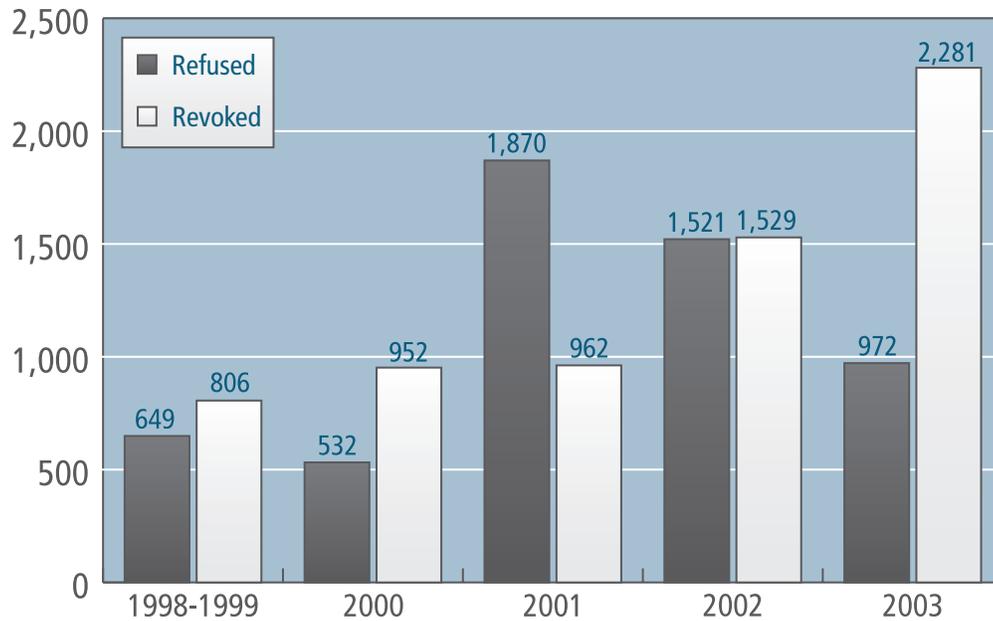


As part of the program's continuous eligibility processes, valid firearms licences are monitored to minimize public safety risks. During 2003, the CAFC's enhanced screening and continuous eligibility checks led to the refusal or revocation of 3,253 firearms licences on public safety grounds, helping reduce the risk of unsafe firearm use that might lead to violence and tragedy (Table 6).



Table 6

Licence refusals and revocations since December 1, 1998



The Canadian Firearms Program at work

The Canadian Firearms Program, in its continuing effort to improve client services, has been assisting the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy (a Canadian Firearms Safety Course Delivery Agent) in the development of a pilot project to provide an on-line "home study" version of the Canadian Firearms Safety Course.

Safety training

To be eligible for a firearms licence to possess and acquire non-restricted firearms, individuals must first pass the Canadian Firearms Safety Course. They must also pass the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course to possess and acquire restricted firearms. The courses teach firearm users about safe handling, use, storage, display and transportation of firearms and ammunition. Course material also reminds individuals of their social responsibility and the requirements of the *Firearms Act* and its regulations.

Canadian Firearms Safety Course instructors and examiners are designated by CFOs across the country. These instructors remained very active during 2003, as is shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Number of individuals who completed safety training

Type of Training	2003	Total to Date
Canadian Firearms Safety Course	29,085	209,785
Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course	6,105	35,123
Alternative Certification ¹	591	7,039
Total	35,781	251,947

The Canadian Firearms Program at work

Every firearm must be verified before it is registered. The regulations provide for this verification process to ensure that the data entered into the Canadian Firearms Information System is accurate and complete. With this in mind, a National Verifiers Network was created in 1998 to ensure the highest quality of service to applicants. The Network has recruited and trained over 5,000 volunteer verifiers in many locations across Canada. Verification is an important quality-assurance tool for the Canadian Firearms Information System.

Registration

Significant progress in firearms registration was also realized with more than 1.3 million firearms registered during 2003 alone. This number, when added to the total of previous registrations, shows that Canadian firearm owners are complying with the law in large numbers and, in doing so, are contributing to safe communities across the country. Table 8 provides a breakdown by class of firearms registered. (Please refer to Appendix E for statistics on registration certificates issued by jurisdiction in 2003.)

¹ In some cases, a CFO may certify that an individual, who has owned a firearm since 1979, has the required knowledge of the safe handling and use of firearms and the laws relating to firearms. These individuals are exempted from having to pass the Canadian Firearms Safety Course.

Table 8

Number of firearms registrations

Type of Registration	2003	Total to Date
Non-restricted firearms	1,219,676	6,245,748
Restricted firearms	70,084	364,239
Prohibited firearms	34,368	208,086
Total number of distinct firearms registered	1,324,128	6,818,073

Non-residents

Non-residents who take part in activities in Canada such as hunting and target shooting competitions make an important contribution to our economy. To facilitate the travel of non-residents while keeping track of firearms brought into Canada, non-residents must declare their firearms in writing, using the non-resident firearm declaration, unless they have a valid Canadian firearms licence and have registered their firearms in Canada. Once a customs officer has confirmed a declaration, it serves as a temporary licence and registration certificate.

During the year, 75,979 non-resident firearm declarations were received. Of these, 10,206 were for a repeat visit.

Criminal justice system support

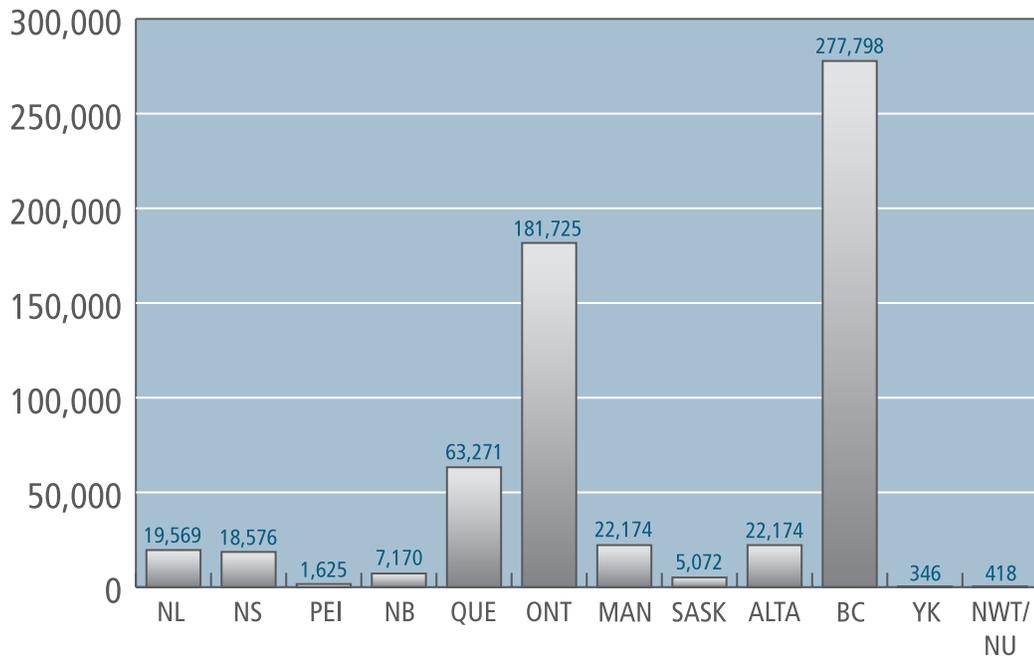
The CAFC provides support to the criminal justice system by several means, including providing certain program information to law enforcement agencies. Through the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line, for example, the Program provides police officers with vital electronic links to firearms-related data, which help them:

- develop strategies to address risks before responding to a call;
- distinguish legally-owned firearms from illegally-owned ones;
- identify stolen firearms; and
- track firearms when investigating gun crimes and gun smuggling.

Use of the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line rose significantly during the year. The number of queries by police increased from an average of 1500 per day prior to 2003, to 1700 per day during 2003. Table 9 below shows access to the system by jurisdiction.

Table 9

Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line 2003 access statistics



The Program also provided criminal justice system support in other ways:

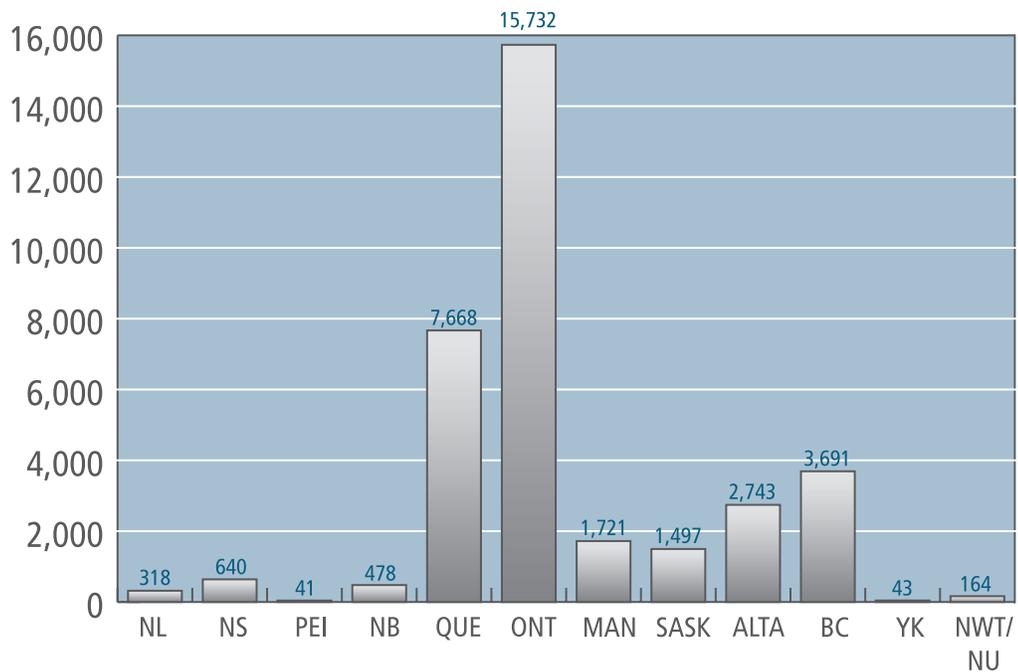
- the total number of trace requests received was 8,725 (RCMP Tracing Unit statistics). Of those, the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team carried out 1,480 trace requests to help combat illegal firearms smuggling and cross-border trafficking; and
- various players in the Program prepared a total of 1,152 affidavits, used to support the prosecution of firearm-related offences.

When a court issues an order prohibiting an individual from possessing firearms, the *Firearms Act* requires the court to notify the CFO for that jurisdiction to take the necessary actions. By the end of 2003, there was a cumulative total of 34,736 prohibition orders across Canada. Table 10 shows the breakdown by jurisdiction.



Table 10

Provincial breakdown of persons prohibited from possessing a firearm



Service improvements

The CAFC is always trying to find new and better ways to deliver services to its clients. This year, we continued to improve our client communications and to enhance the on-line tools we provide for them.

- the CAFC continued to offer free on-line registration services to encourage firearm users to comply with the law. This initiative was extremely successful, with 80 per cent of applicants submitting their applications electronically over the course of the year;
- Web site services were enhanced to let firearm owners report address changes and check the status of their licence and registration applications on-line. This is much faster and more convenient for most firearm owners than telephoning or using the postal system;
- an additional on-line service was provided to allow the transfer of non-restricted firearms between businesses and individuals, and between businesses. This increased the convenience of such transfers and helped reduce waiting times for both businesses and individual owners. There were 2,289 on-line transfers between businesses and 7,719 between businesses and individuals during 2003;

- improvements to the toll-free assistance line were completed, resulting in faster service for CAFC clients. Response times for telephone inquiries improved significantly, from an average of 17 minutes per call to under two minutes; and
- by the end of 2003, the CAFC was processing properly completed registration applications within 30 days of receipt. Licence applications were being processed within 45 days, including a mandatory legislated 28-day waiting period. In so doing, service standards for both activities were being met.

Communicating with Canadians

During 2003, the CAFC carried out a wide range of activities to inform Canadians about the requirements of the law and the benefits and contributions of the Program. The CAFC is committed to communicating with Canadians and program clients to address specific service requests, deal with problems and identify and explore new and better ways to deliver the Firearms Program.

Our communication with the public takes several forms:

- **public inquiries** — the CAFC responded to more than 550,000 inquiries via telephone, e-mail and regular mail. These were largely to provide licensing and registration applications status checks, and to advise on the import and export of firearms. Many inquiries were also to obtain general information on the Program and its costs;
- **CAFC Web site** — the CAFC Web site contains a wide range of information on the Canadian Firearms Program, on firearms legislation and on firearms control in Canada. There were over 600,000 visits to the site. The site can also be used to gain access to CAFC's on-line services such as registration, change of address and status check;
- **media relations** — media relations have focused on promoting compliance and responding to inquiries about program costs, the licensing and registration requirements under the *Firearms Act*. General program information, public safety benefits of the Program and various statistical information such as police use of the data from the Canadian Firearms Information System and compliance rates were other common inquiries;



- **bulletins for specialized audiences** — a total of 14 bulletins were sent to specialized audiences such as police, public agents and businesses to notify them of program changes that will have an impact on their work, such as the deferral of certain regulations, new services or proposed legislative or regulatory amendments; and
- **consultations with stakeholders and the public** — the CAFC held a series of consultations with stakeholders in Montreal, Calgary, Moncton, Toronto and Ottawa. To obtain input from the general public on the design and delivery of the Program, as well as the proposed regulations, people were invited to express their views on-line through the CAFC consultation Web site. Both initiatives were very successful.

Working with Aboriginal peoples

The Firearms Program recognizes the unique circumstances of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. For example, the *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada Adaptations Regulations* are intended to help compliance while maintaining safety requirements under the *Act*. These regulations address difficulties that Aboriginal applicants might face and provide options to help them meet those requirements. For example:

- using a translator or having someone help an applicant fill out an application form when there are language barriers; and
- requesting alternative certification (an alternative way of testing for an applicant's knowledge and practice of firearms safety) by a CFO when, for example, applicants who live in remote areas have difficult access to safety training courses and testing.

To support the administration of the *Firearms Act*, encourage firearms safety and enhance participation in the Firearms Program in Aboriginal communities, the CAFC supported several projects. For more information about key projects with Aboriginal communities, please refer to Appendix F.

CFOs across the country also work with Aboriginal communities and organizations to deliver the Firearms Program in a way that meets the special needs and circumstances of Aboriginal peoples.

International initiatives

As a member on the Canadian delegation, the CAFC took part in the First Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in New York. The CAFC will continue to participate in this important, multilateral forum.

The CAFC supported Canadian participation in the April meeting of the Consultative Committee on the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, a committee of the Organization of American States.

On the Canada–United States front, the CAFC holds the position of Canadian Co-chair of the Bi-National Firearms Trafficking Consultative Group, which reports to the Canada–U.S. Cross-Border Crime Forum. In this role, the CAFC works closely with Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, the RCMP, the Canadian Border Services Agency and other Canadian agencies and American counterparts to address issues of national and bi-national concern.

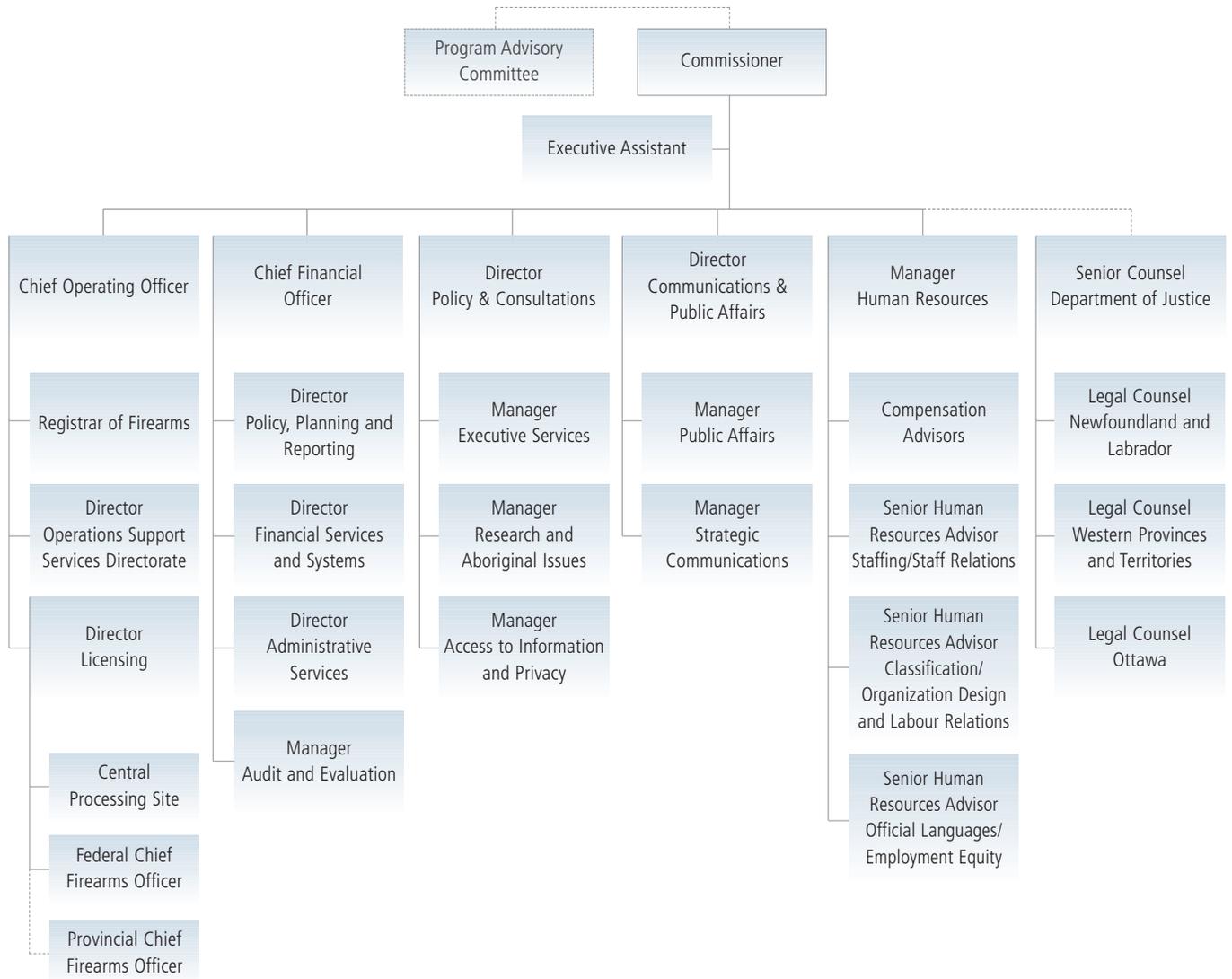
MOVING FORWARD

During 2004, the CAFC will be guided by seven major strategic directions to achieve improved public safety and enhanced Firearms Program administration and accountability.

- **optimize the public safety benefits of the Canadian Firearms Program** — in all measures it takes, the CAFC will continue to ensure that the public safety benefits of the Firearms Program are maximized;
- **enhance compliance with the law** — compliance will be further enhanced by working closely with CFOs, concerned federal agencies, the provinces and territories, police organizations and other public safety and health officials, as well as with firearm owners and users;
- **ensure public input for continuous program improvement** — the CAFC will develop outreach strategies to help it work with stakeholders to strengthen program delivery and reach groups with particular needs;
- **improve service delivery** — the CAFC will continue to improve its services in particular by expanding on-line delivery;
- **increase efficiency of operations** — the CAFC will continue to improve the efficiency of its operations through its Continuous Improvement Plan. This will include initiatives to streamline processes and achieve savings;
- **strengthen financial and human resources management** — the focus on ensuring sound financial management will continue and tools to ensure that the CAFC meets its financial targets are being put into place. The departmental labour-management infrastructure will continue to work with employee representatives, while day-to-day internal communications continue to engage and inform employees about the Program and its development; and
- **expand reporting to Parliament and the public on performance** — the CAFC is committed to high-quality reporting to Parliament and the public. It will continue enhancing the quality of information provided to Canadians about the CAFC and the Canadian Firearms Program.

APPENDIX A

ORGANIZATION OF THE CAFC



APPENDIX B

CAFC'S PARTNERS

CAFC works with many partners, including other government bodies. Among these partners are:

- **Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada** — the CAFC and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada work closely to ensure that the Minister, parliamentarians and senior government officials have the information necessary to carry out their responsibilities;
- **Royal Canadian Mounted Police** — access to selected information in the RCMP's Canadian Police Information Centre system is available via the Canadian Firearms Information System. When CFOs conduct background checks on people who have applied for a licence, some information comes from the Canadian Police Information Centre, through the Firearms Interest Police database.

Firearms Interest Police is a category of files in the Canadian Police Information Centre database that contains information from local police agencies about a person's criminal convictions, violent incidents (including incidents of violence or threatened violence associated with mental illness) or any other public safety concerns. Upon notification of a Firearms Interest Police event that matches with a firearms licence holder, the CFO will conduct an investigation to determine licence eligibility.

The RCMP Forensic Laboratory, Firearms Section, provides firearms technical support to the Registrar on firearms classifications and firearms descriptions. The Forensic Laboratory also manages the Firearms Reference Table, an encyclopaedic research tool developed by the RCMP that provides narrative and graphic information relating to the description, technical identification and legal classification of firearms. The Firearms Reference Table is used by the Program to accurately identify and classify firearms.

The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team is a specialized service operating under the National Police Services. The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team is a Canada-wide network of officers who

support police investigations involving the criminal use of firearms, including the trafficking and smuggling of illegal firearms;

- **provinces and territories** — Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have appointed their own CFO under the *Firearms Act*. The Government of Canada funds these operations according to contribution agreements between the provinces and the Federal Government. The CFO for Newfoundland and Labrador and the CFO for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are appointed federally;
- **Canada Border Services Agency** — the Canada Border Services Agency has been responsible for assessing and confirming non-resident firearm declarations and collecting the applicable fees, consistent with the provisions of the *Firearms Act* and other relevant legislation. This involves determining the classification of the firearms, establishing the destination and purpose for importing the firearms, assessing the eligibility of the importer, and ensuring that all firearms are being transported safely and in accordance with the law. Once confirmed, a non-resident firearm declaration serves as a temporary licence and registration;
- **Department of Justice Canada** — responsibility for the *Criminal Code*, including Part III (Firearms and Other Weapons), rests with the Minister of Justice. The Department of Justice Canada provides legal advice, drafting and litigation services to the CAFC;
- **International Trade Canada** — International Trade Canada issues the permits required to export and import firearms under the *Export and Import Permits Act*; and
- **Foreign Affairs Canada** — the CAFC works with Foreign Affairs Canada to ensure that Canada’s international firearms commitments are in line with domestic priorities and the country’s ability to implement them.

APPENDIX C

FULFILLING THE *GUN CONTROL PROGRAM ACTION PLAN*

This Action Plan, which the Government of Canada announced in February 2003, has guided the improvement of the Canadian Firearms Program and has allowed the CAFC to maintain the Program's public safety benefits while lowering its costs. Important corporate capacities in the area of financial management and reporting were also established to support the Minister in accounting to Parliament on the CAFC and the Canadian Firearms Program. (The first Main Estimates on the CAFC as an independent agency were tabled in March 2004.)

Under the Action Plan, the CAFC has streamlined management, improved service, strengthened the Program's accountability and transparency, and obtained valuable input from stakeholders, parliamentarians and the public. Of the 16 changes the Action Plan required (as set out below), 12 were completed in 2003.

Cost reduction and improved management

- The National Weapons Enforcement Support Team was moved to the National Police Services, administered by the RCMP. This move helps to better align enforcement operations – **completed**;
- the operations of the CAFC headquarters were streamlined to save costs and improve management by closing the Edmonton headquarters and consolidating the functions in Ottawa – **completed**;
- consolidation of the Miramichi and Quebec processing sites was begun, with the intention of establishing one Central Processing Site in Miramichi, New Brunswick. Although this was still underway at the end of 2003, it was completed early in 2004. The consolidation is expected to save approximately \$2 million annually while maintaining current service standards and allowing the CAFC to maintain its bilingual capacity – **underway**;

- the CAFC established a Continuous Improvement Plan to improve the management of the Canadian Firearms Program. The plan has three aims: to increase the efficiency of CAFC operations; to enhance client services; and to ensure greater compliance with the law. Each component of the plan has a specific goal by which the CAFC can measure its success. The plan will be updated regularly – **completed**;
- the CAFC took the initial steps in developing national work performance standards by establishing service baselines through contribution agreements with our provincial partners – **underway**; and
- computer system changes were restricted to projects that would immediately improve the Program – **completed**.

Improved service to the public and to users of firearms

- The CAFC's Web site services were enhanced to let firearm owners report address changes and check the status of their licence and registration applications on-line. An additional on-line service was provided to allow the transfer of non-restricted firearms between businesses and between businesses and individuals – **completed**;
- improvements to the toll-free assistance line were implemented in 2003, resulting in faster service for CAFC clients – **completed**;
- by the end of 2003, the CAFC was processing properly completed registration applications by the standard of within 30 days of receipt. Licence applications were being processed within the 45 day standard, including a mandatory legislated 28-day waiting period – **completed**; and
- the Program continued to use the CAFC Web site and specialized bulletins to inform firearm owners of new, improved CAFC services and to help them comply with the firearms registration and other requirements – **completed**.



Input from parliamentarians, stakeholders and the public

- The CAFC carried out numerous consultations with stakeholders and the public on the design and delivery of the Canadian Firearms Program. These consultations dealt with the administration of the Program as well as proposed changes to the *Firearms Act* regulations that the Government tabled in June 2003. They involved two tracks, one being meetings with stakeholders and the other involving on-line public consultations. Parliamentary committees considered the proposed regulatory changes in October 2003 – **completed**; and
- the Program Advisory Committee was established in June 2003 and held two meetings during the year. It includes people with expertise in public safety, policy development and program administration, people with experience in business and industry, and firearm users. Members serve in their own right and not as representatives or delegates of host organizations. The Program Advisory Committee advises the Commissioner of Firearms about the design and delivery of the Canadian Firearms Program – **completed**.

Strengthened accountability and transparency

- The full federal costs of the Canadian Firearms Program were reported to Parliament in 2003. The CAFC annual operating costs have declined to approximately \$100 million, which is half of what they were at their peak in 2000-2001 – **completed**;
- the position of Chief Financial Officer was created and staffed in 2003 to strengthen the CAFC's financial management. The Chief Financial Officer coordinates financial planning, budgeting, reporting, recording and controlling of all transactions and resources within the CAFC, including audit and evaluation – **completed**;
- the passage of Bill C-10A set the stage for the preparation and the tabling in Parliament of the first report by the Commissioner of Firearms on the administration of the *Firearms Act* – **underway**; and
- to strengthen its accountability and transparency, the CAFC established an Audit and Evaluation Committee in 2003, chaired by the Commissioner and a Departmental Audit and Evaluation Unit. As of the end of 2003, the terms of reference, audit and evaluation policies, and a multi-year audit and evaluation plan were under development – **underway**.

APPENDIX D

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jim Bouchard

Radville, Saskatchewan

Mr. Bouchard, a former member of the Minister's User Group on Firearms, is the owner and operator of a 1700-acre grain and cattle farm in southeast Saskatchewan.

Wendy Cukier

Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Cukier, a tenured professor at Ryerson University, is the coordinator for the Small Arms/Firearms Education Research Network and volunteer President of the Canadian Coalition for Gun Control.

David Griffin

Executive Officer
Canadian Professional Police
Association
Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. Griffin is responsible for the implementation of the association's justice reform agenda, government and public advocacy program and the management of the association's affairs.

Peter E. Larson

Executive Vice-President
Public Policy Forum
Ottawa, Ontario

Dr. Larson has extensive experience working with both the public and private sectors and has authored or directed a large number of studies and research reports on a wide range of public administration issues.

Marilou McPhedran

Victoria, British Columbia

Ms. McPhedran is a lawyer, consultant and volunteer for many causes with a focus on equality and health. She is the co-founder and past Chair of the Board of Metrac – the Metro Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children.

Leslie A. Pal

Director, School of Public Policy
and Administration
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

Dr. Pal is the author, co-author or editor of 19 books and his consulting includes work with the Ukrainian Academy of Public Administration and the Open Society Institute (Budapest), the World Bank and the Hong Kong Civil Service Training and Development Institute.

Robert Simon

Director General, Centre de prévention
du suicide
Chicoutimi, Québec

Mr. Simon has worked with wildlife
and outdoor groups to stress the
importance of safe firearms storage.

Peter Sorensen

President, PRP International Inc.
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Mr. Sorensen has extensive experience
in project management including
serving as the Government of Canada
project leader on the Confederation
Bridge Project.

Stephen Torino

Mont-Royal, Quebec

Mr. Torino, the former Chair of the
Minister's User Group on Firearms, is
a Chartered Accountant and long-time
firearms' collector and target shooter.
He has also held numerous executive
positions in trapshooting and
collecting associations.

Vince Westwick

Canadian Association of
Chiefs of Police
Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. Westwick is General Counsel of
the Ottawa Police Service. A former
police officer, he is Co-chair of the
Law Amendments Committee of the
Canadian Association of Chiefs
of Police.

Alan Winberg

Senior Visiting Fellow,
Public Management
Canadian Centre for Management
Development
Ottawa, Ontario

Dr. Winberg has served in different
Assistant Deputy Minister positions
at Human Resources Development
Canada and the Treasury Board
Secretariat and has also held senior
positions in a number of other
government departments.

APPENDIX E

LICENCES AND REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES ISSUED IN 2003

Licences issued by owner type and jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Possession Acquisition	Possession Only	Minors Licence	Business Licence	TOTAL
NL	4,414	40	63	322	4,839
NS	3,208	73	355	214	3,850
PEI	281	4	1	29	315
NB	2,974	401	30	183	3,588
QUE	33,728	3,858	66	934	38,586
ONT	32,843	303	1,423	995	35,564
MAN	5,434	70	55	262	5,821
SASK	7,720	161	77	374	8,332
ALTA	16,826	195	275	452	17,748
BC	15,095	386	59	463	16,003
YK	614	10	16	15	655
NWT	560	4	3	49	616
NU	239	0	2	51	292
TOTALS	123,936	5,505	2,425	4,343	136,209



Registration certificates issued by class of firearm and jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Non- Restricted	Restricted	Prohibited	TOTAL
NL	16,705	424	212	17,341
NS	46,319	2,175	1,211	49,705
PEI	3,324	198	99	3,621
NB	48,845	1,664	799	51,308
QUE	180,892	6,661	6,983	194,536
ONT	450,156	30,011	14,140	494,307
MAN	65,423	2,437	1,148	69,008
SASK	98,337	4,640	1,606	104,583
ALTA	154,966	10,209	3,838	169,013
BC	134,041	11,038	4,077	149,156
YK	4,577	272	104	4,953
NWT	3,739	273	112	4,124
NU	1,693	36	5	1,734
US	10,376	39	30	10,445
Other	283	7	4	294
TOTALS	1,219,676	70,084	34,368	1,324,128

APPENDIX F

WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Since the implementation of the *Firearms Act*, the CAFC has promoted Aboriginal participation in administering the Canadian Firearms Program. In support of the shared objective of community safety, the CAFC, CFOs and Aboriginal communities have jointly undertaken a variety of initiatives to facilitate and support firearms licensing and registration, as well as to train firearm owners in the safe handling, storage and use of firearms.

During 2003, the CAFC concluded several contribution agreements with Aboriginal organizations. These agreements provided key opportunities for the CAFC and Aboriginal peoples to work together on projects at national, regional and local levels and for new approaches to be tested and assessed. These include:

- the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation successfully delivered safety training, firearms verification and licence and registration assistance to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Northwestern Ontario. The project not only improved compliance but also provided a model that other communities can use to achieve similar results in support of community safety;
- several First Nations in east-central Alberta began a project to develop a safe-hunting curriculum for on-reserve schools. The project is intended not only as a safety initiative but also to help coordinate firearm safety partnerships among the Tribal Chiefs Association, the Alberta Treaty 6 First Nations, the Government of Alberta and the CAFC;
- a joint project of the CAFC and the Assembly of First Nations provided a national forum on approaches to communications, outreach and related services in First Nation communities throughout the western provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. It also focused on strategies for community participation in firearms administration and service delivery; and
- CFOs across the country work with Aboriginal communities and organizations to support and promote firearm safety and the implementation of the Canadian Firearms Program to meet the shared objective of community safety.



